

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 SIL-01 LAB-04 /077 W
-----056436 191236Z /11

R 191100Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 1099

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PCI OFFICIALS

SUMMARY: DURING A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, ITALIAN
COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SECRETARIAT MEMBER GIORGIO NAPOLITANO
HINTED THAT HIS PARTY WOULD BE PREPARED TO SETTLE FOR LESS
THAN THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY AS
A WAY OUT OF THE NATION'S CURRENT CRISIS. ATTRIBUTING THE
PARTY'S SO-CALLED HARDER LINE TO A COMBINATION OF PRESSURES
AND DEVELOPMENTS, NAPOLITANO INDICATED THAT THE PCI IS NOW
WAITING FOR A CONCRETE PROPOSAL FROM THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS
(DC) BEFORE PLAYING ANY MORE OF ITS CARDS. NAPOLITANO WAS CRITICAL OF
THE JANUARY 12 DEPARTMENT OF STATE STATE-
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MENT ON COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS,
AND HE INDICATED THAT HE EXPECTED TO LECTURE IN THE
UNITED STATES DURING THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL. END
SUMMARY.

1. DURING A JANUARY 13 CONVERSATION, PCI SECRETARIAT
MEMBER GIORGIO NAPOLITANO SUGGESTED THAT HIS PARTY

WOULD NOT INSIST ON ITS DEMAND FOR THE CREATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY AS THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL CRISIS EVOLVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE STATED IT WOULD BE WRONG TO CONCLUDE THAT THE PCI DOES NOT HAVE SOME MINIMUM OBJECTIVES WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE MET IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT A COMPROMISE WHICH MIGHT PROVE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTIES. FOR THE TIME BEING, HOWEVER, THE PCI FINDS IT USEFUL, IN TERMS OF ITS BASE, TO CONFINE ITS PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS TO CALLS FOR A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, SINCE IT IS A SIMPLE, CLEAR FORMULATION WHICH THE BASE FINDS EASY TO UNDERSTAND.

2. ASKED TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS THE PCI DECIDED TO SHIFT COURSE AT ITS DECEMBER 7 DIRECTORATE MEETING, NAPOLITANO STATED THAT IT HAD STEMMED FROM A VARIETY OF PRESSURES AND DEVELOPMENTS. HE DID NOT HIDE DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE PARTY'S BASE AS ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT REASONS FOR THE CHANGED ATTITUDE. HE SAID THAT THE JUNE 20 ELECTION RESULTS HAD LED TO MANY ILLUSIONS AND MUCH WISHFUL THINKING WITHIN THE PARTY AT THE SAME TIME AS THEY PRESENTED THE PARTY WITH DIFFICULT POLITICAL CHOICES. IN TERMS OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BASE, NAPOLITANO CHARACTERIZED THE MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD AS THAT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONFIRMATION OF THE ANDREOTTI MINORITY

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GOVERNMENT. PATIENT PARTY WORK FOLLOWED BY THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD SERVED GREATLY TO ASSUAGE THE SKEPTICISM OF THE BASE ABOUT WHETHER THE EXISTING POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT HAD MORE DISADVANTAGES THAN ADVANTAGES FOR THE PCI.

3. CONTINUING, NAPOLITANO OBSERVED THAT THERE WAS A SHARP DETERIORATION IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE FALL. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO INCREASED STRAINS WITHIN THE DC GOVERNMENT LEADING TO SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS AMONG MINISTERS AND CONFUSION IN DRAWING UP LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS. IN SUM, THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT SHOWED SIGNS OF BEING WORN OUT, AND THIS WAS RECOGNIZED BY THE PARTY BASE. FURTHERMORE, AS THE MONTHS WORE ON, THE PCI FOUND THAT IT WAS ALMOST ALONE IN CONTINUING TO SUPPORT THE EXISTENCE OF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT AFTER THE SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR DISENCHANTMENT. (NAPOLITANO, OBVIOUSLY REACTING TO CHARGES THAT THE COMMUNISTS SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT CRISIS, ARGUED THAT THEY HAD ONLY ACTED AFTER OTHERS HAD STARTED THE BALL INTO MOTION.) OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PCI ACTIONS, ACCORDING TO

NAPOLITANO, WERE THE INCREASINGLY MILITANT ATTITUDES
OF THE TRADE UNION FORCES TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT AND
THE DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMY AND OF THE PUBLIC
SECURITY SITUATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 1099

4. NAPOLITANO SAID IT WAS NOW UP TO THE DC TO MAKE A
COUNTERPROPOSAL TO THE CALLS OF THE COMMUNISTS AND
OTHERS FOR A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY. HE
REVEALED THAT AT ITS DIRECTORATE MEETING ON JANUARY 12,
THE PCI LEADERSHIP HAD DECIDED TO REITERATE ITS PREVIOUSLY
STATED POSITION IN THE ABSENCE OF A NEW DC NEGOTIATING PROPOSAL.
THE LEADERSHIP WILL SUBMIT ITS POSITION FOR RATIFICATION
TO THE PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE BEING CONVENED FOR
JANUARY 26. NAPOLITANO STATED THAT AT THE JANUARY 12
DIRECTORATE SESSION, THE LEADERSHIP HAD PUT THE FINISHING
TOUCHES TO THE LINE WHICH IT WOULD TAKE AT THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE SESSION. AT THE SAME TIME, NAPOLITANO RULED
OUT THE PCI'S PLAYING ANY OF ITS CARDS IN THE ABSENCE
OF A NEW NEGOTIATING POSITION FROM THE DC, AND HE
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STRESSED THAT THE PCI REMAINS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

5. NAPOLITANO UNEMOTIONALLY CRITICIZED THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S STATEMENT ON WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISM WHICH HAD BEEN RELEASED THE PREVIOUS DAY. HE CHARACTERIZED IT AS UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE IN ITALIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND HE PARTICULARLY COMPLAINED ABOUT INCLUSION IN THE STATEMENT OF THE QUOTATION FROM PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH IN PARIS. EMBOFF REJECTED NAPOLITANO'S CHARGES ABOUT INTERFERENCE, NOTING THAT WE HAD EVERY RIGHT TO EXPRESS OUR OPINION ON DEVELOPMENTS WHICH AFFECT OUR INTERESTS, LEAVING IT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD, AT THE SAME TIME, THAT THE FINAL DECISION ON THE SUBJECT RESTS WITH THE ITALIAN PEOPLE. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE STATEMENT REPRESENTED NO NEW DEPARTURE IN POLICY ON THE PART OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

6. EMBOFF TOLD NAPOLITANO THAT THE PCI SHOULD HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE DOUBTS WHICH EXIST IN AMERICA ABOUT THE PARTY'S COMMITMENT NOT ONLY TO PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY BUT ALSO TO THE CONCEPT OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. EMBOFF POINTED TO PARTY PRESIDENT LUIGI LONGO'S RECENT INTERVIEW IN CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND THE PCI'S ACT OF SIGNING A JOINT DECLARATION LAST AUGUST WITH 27 OTHER COMMUNIST PARTIES, INCLUDING THE SOVIET, AS ADDING FUEL TO THOSE DOUBTS. NAPOLITANO DISMISSED THE LATTER EVENT AS "AN AUGUST MISTAKE" WHILE HE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN AWAY LONGO'S COMMENTS BY POINTING OUT THAT HE IS AN OLD AND SICK MAN WHO HOLDS ONLY AN HONORARY POSITION IN THE PARTY HIERARCHY.

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7. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONVERSATION, NAPOLITANO SAID HE EXPECTS TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL TO ACCEPT A NUMBER OF LECTURE INVITATIONS HE HAS RECEIVED. HE MENTIONED THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY BE VISITING PRINCETON, YALE AND HARVARD UNIVERSITIES, AND HE OBSERVED THAT HE ALSO HOPES TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON TO CONTACT SOME PEOPLE THERE. EMBOFF URGED NAPOLITANO TO APPLY FOR HIS VISA IN A TIMELY MANNER. GARDNER

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